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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/27/2019
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SUBJECT: DPRK: RUSSIA AND JAPAN CONSIDER MISSILE LAUNCH
RESPONSE

Classified By: Amb. Alex Wolff for Reasons 1.4 (B), (D)

¶1. (C) In separate meetings with Ambassador Wolff, Russian Deputy Perm Rep Dolgov and Japanese Perm Rep Takasu offered different approaches to responding to a possible Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) missile launch. Dolgov said that Moscow had sought to discourage the DPRK from this destabilizing action, but believed that the launch of a DPRK "space satellite" would not be a direct violation of UNSCR 1718. Russia's approach in the Council, he said, would therefore depend on a technical analysis of any launch. Wolff said the United States would consider any launch to be a violation of UNSCR 1718 and require a Council response. According to Japanese Perm Rep Takasu, Japan also believed that any launch would be a violation of 1718. Japan, he said, believed the Council should respond with a resolution (not a Presidential Statement) that would enhance existing sanctions against DPRK. Takasu urgently sought a U.S. response to this idea, as it would allow the Japanese foreign minister to better calibrate his message during an upcoming trip to Beijing. In the event of a missile launch, Wolff emphasized to Takasu the need for prior consultation to avoid demonstrating disunity. A Presidential Statement, Wolff added, might be a better first step. END SUMMARY.

RUSSIA: REACTION DEPENDS ON WHAT IS LAUNCHED

¶1. (C) On February 27, Russian Deputy Perm Rep Dolgov told Ambassador Wolff that Moscow had been discouraging the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) from a possible missile launch. Reading from instructions, Dolgov said that Moscow had warned DPRK not to pursue even a "space experiment," as this might be "evaluated under certain circumstances" as a violation of UNSCR 1718. He said, however, that Russia's reaction in the Security Council would depend on the technical details of what precisely DPRK had launched. Strictly speaking, he said, a launch that placed a satellite in orbit would not be a direct violation of UNSCR 1718, even if it might be seen as a violation of the "spirit" of that resolution.

¶2. (C) Dolgov conveyed Russia's wish that no parties state publicly in advance whether such a launch would violate UNSCR 1718, adding that UNSCR 1718 did not touch upon the peaceful exploration of space. If there were to be a launch, he urged close coordination with the United States to analyze the missile trajectory and other technical parameters required to make an assessment of what actually had been launched. He noted that this could take some time and therefore the Council should refrain from meeting until this analysis was complete.

¶3. (C) Wolff responded that even if DPRK claims the missile is a space launch vehicle, this act would constitute a violation of not just the spirit, but also the letter of UNSCR 1718. Adding that a launch would also be highly provocative, Wolff said the Council would have to respond. He added that the United States shares the view that there should be prior consultations before any Council meeting, particularly so as to avoid highlighting any divisions among

participants in the Six Party process. He emphasized, though, that for political reasons -- including the need to manage the reactions of South Korea and Japan -- a Council meeting could not wait long after a launch. Indeed, he observed, it could be better to channel the reactions of Japan and South Korea through Council action.

JAPAN: WILL SEEK RESOLUTION, SANCTIONS ENHANCEMENT

¶16. (C) Also on February 27, Japanese Perm Rep Takasu urgently requested a meeting to convey Tokyo's considered position following his conversation with Ambassador Rice the previous day and the Japanese foreign minister's discussion with the Secretary regarding Council action in response to a DPRK missile launch. Takasu said Japan concluded that a missile launch would indeed be a violation of UNSCR 1718 and his foreign minister intended to state this publicly during his visit to Beijing the coming weekend.

¶17. (C) Citing the seriousness of the threat to Japan's security and the lack of progress on the DPRK-Japan bilateral relationship, Takasu said Japan would pursue a Security Council resolution in response to a launch. A Council Presidential Statement (PRST), he argued, would not be strong enough. He said Japan would not seek new sanctions, but rather the enhancement of existing sanctions measures found in UNSCR 1718, such as directing the Security Council's DPRK Sanctions Committee ("1718 Committee") to designate new individuals and entities responsible for the launch. Takasu

explained that if the United States were adamantly opposed to a resolution in response to a launch, then Japan would seek to calibrate its message to Beijing accordingly.

¶18. (C) Wolff said that the United States shares Japan's assessment that any missile launch would be a violation, both in spirit and letter, of UNSCR 1718 and would require a response from the Council. He emphasized the need to consult closely in advance of a possible Council meeting so as to not demonstrate disunity. Wolff observed that if DPRK successfully launched a satellite in orbit, then Russia and China would likely argue that no violation had occurred and would therefore be unlikely to support a resolution. A PRST might be a better first step, he suggested. Takasu said he understood and urged us to respond to their proposed approach urgently to help shape the Japanese foreign minister's presentation in Beijing.

Rice

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